

Dog Flu Can Spread Easily and Lead to Serious Respiratory Illness

Facts about the Disease and a New Vaccine to Protect Dogs Now Available

Flu is big news this season, and not just for humans. Dogs, too, can get their own kind of flu, known as canine influenza virus (CIV), dog flu or simply “Type A H3N8.” Although it is not the same as the human variety, isn’t seasonal and people can’t catch it, dog flu is highly contagious to other dogs. Because canine flu is relatively new, dogs have no natural immunity.

Oak Harbor Veterinary Hospital is offering a new canine influenza vaccine, the first of its kind, to pet owners in the Oak Harbor community. The vaccine may not prevent infection, but it significantly reduces the severity and length of time the dog may be sick and the spread to other dogs by reducing shedding of the virus. The canine influenza vaccine is recommended for all dogs who typically receive the Bordetella vaccine and for all dogs belonging to animal healthcare workers.

First identified in 2004, canine flu outbreaks have been detected in 30 states and the District of Columbia. While dogs of all ages and breeds are susceptible, the risk is even higher for those that:

- board in kennels
- go to pet stores
- come from shelters or rescue groups
- attend doggie daycare
- participate in dog shows
- go to grooming parlors
- congregate in parks and other gathering spots.
- are owned by rescue group members

“Keeping pets healthy is our primary mission. We are proud to be in the forefront of Vet Hospitals offering this new vaccine to help protect dogs in our community,” said Dr. Stone. “Please call us with your questions and concerns so we can help you make the right decision for your pets.”

Dog flu spreads much the same way as human flu – through direct contact, through the air by coughing or sneezing and via contaminated surfaces, such as hands, toys and clothing. Dogs with no signs of infection can spread the virus and often do not begin to cough until several days *after* they become contagious. One sick dog can cause an outbreak through an entire care facility.

Symptoms of canine influenza, often confused with kennel cough (*Bordetella*), include low-grade fever, runny nose, lack of energy, loss of appetite and a cough that can last for up to a month. About 80 percent of cases are mild. Another 20 percent, however, have more severe symptoms, including high fever and pneumonia. A small percentage die from complications associated with the disease. There is currently no specific treatment for dog flu other than supportive care. In some cases, secondary bacterial infections may cause further complications.

Oak Harbor Veterinary Hospital
1386 S. St. Rt. 19
Oak Harbor, OH 43449
419-898-3411
ohvh@northcoastvets.com